

Attitudes, Beliefs and Knowledge of Iraqi EFL Teachers Regarding Peer Tutoring¹

Dr. Ali Abdul Mohsin Al-Hajmee

*Department of English Language, College of Education,
Sawa University, Almutana Iraq*

DOI:10.37648/ijrssh.v13i02.062

Received: 10 May 2023; Accepted: 10 June 2023; Published: 17 June 2023

ABSTRACT

To better promote the various elements of learning, the language education industry has made a considerable shift to a more learner-centered approach. While peer tutoring in the classroom has a large body of literature, there is little study on this method in the field of foreign language in higher education. Teaching and learning a second language should not always follow a linear approach, with the teacher at one end and the student at the other. Since English is a worldwide language, it is essential for communicating with English speakers and should be required for postgraduate study. Language and communication are fundamental to human existence.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

According to LoCastro (2003), other language learners are one of the most important sources of knowledge for language learners. Learning is socially and culturally fostered and formed among students and between instructor and pupils, according to Vygotsky (as cited in Razia, 2012). Although collaborative learning is not a new notion, and the concept of tutoring is likely as ancient as civilization, it was not until the 1700s that it was first applied academically (Topping as cited in Kalkowski, 1995). In the nineteenth century, British educational reformer Joseph Lancaster encouraged children to develop tutoring skills by allowing them to participate in his “monitorial system,” a controversial and revolutionary yet cost-cutting system that helped many poor children learn to read and write and then monitor other children (Aldrich, 1998). Since UNESCO recognizes peer tutoring as a very effective approach for inclusive teaching, it is now one-way cooperative learning is implemented in the education field (Duran, 2006). Peer tutoring programs have grown in popularity in higher education around the world (Chen & Liu, 2011). This is owing to the necessity to address low academic performance and the cost-effectiveness of peer tutoring initiatives, according to Topping (1996). The goal of this study was to look into the participants’ actions and attitudes throughout an EFL peer tutoring experience in higher education and the effects of peer tutoring on students’ English learning and socio-affective results.

As new ideas and viewpoints have emerged, the definition of peer tutoring has evolved. “Archaic definitions of peer tutoring perceived the tutor as a substitute instructor, in a linear model of information transmission, from teacher to tutor to the tutee,” writes Topping (1996). (p. 322). Damon and Phelps (as cited in Kalkowski, 1995) claim that peer tutoring is an expert child instructing a novice child. In today’s educational situations, however, the concept of experts and novices has been debated. As a result, more recent research has linked peer tutoring to mutual assistance. In his teaching-learning philosophy, Peer tutoring, according to Topping (2005), “involves persons from comparable social groups who are not professional teachers assisting one other to learn while learning themselves” (p. 631). Peer

¹ How to cite the article: Al-Hajmee A.A.M.(June 2023) Attitudes, Beliefs and Knowledge of Iraqi EFL Teachers Regarding Peer Tutoring; *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*, Vol 13, Issue 2, 745-751, DOI: <http://doi.org/10.37648/ijrssh.v13i02.062>

tutoring, according to Chen and Liu (2011), “is a type of peer-mediated, peer-assisted learning that employs problem-solving and methodical teaching methodologies to aid the impaired learner” (p. 2). According to Duran et al. (2015), peer tutoring is a method of learning among students, usually in pairs, in which the tutor learns by providing pedagogic assistance to the tutee, who learns through the tutor’s tailored and permanent assistance.

Peer tutoring comprises several methodologies or models discussed in the sections below.

Cross-age Tutoring

This method is distinguished by the inclusion of pupils of various ages. This type of peer tutoring, according to Robinson et al. (2005), “involves students from different grade levels, with the older student functioning as a tutor for the younger student(s)” (p. 329). Similarly, cross-age tutoring frequently incorporates dyads in which tutors have the authority and responsibility to arrange work, ask questions, stimulate conversations, and facilitate better study habits (Hott & Walker, 2012). Tutor and tutee roles do not change during cross-age tutoring, with the tutor typically having higher skill levels.

Peer Assisted Learning

Peer-assisted learning (PAL), according to the University of the West of England in Bristol (n.d.), is an educational assistance scheme in which students are trained to assist other students. This activity allows lower-year students to consolidate their understanding of the discipline in a collaborative environment while also assisting them with their university transition. Because the pairs or teams usually work at the same competence level, learners can participate as tutors or tutees at various times (Hott & Walker, 2012).

Cooperative Learning

Topping (2005) defines cooperative learning as a group activity in which “the instructor, who supports or more strongly guides the interactive process, is likely to involve the specification of goals, tasks, resources, responsibilities, and rewards by the teacher” (p. 632). Cooperative learning, according to Topping, “frequently necessitates training to assure equal participation and simultaneous interaction, synergy, and additional value” (p. 632). According to Yusnani (2018), Cooperative learning strives to transform classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences to guide students’ diverse backgrounds toward cognitive, behavioral, and social interdependence.

Reciprocal Peer Tutoring

According to Falchikov (2001), reciprocal peer tutoring (RPT) is a type of peer tutoring in which students are randomly assigned to test each other in preparation for a class test. RPT allows each student to take on the roles of tutor and tutee, allowing them to gain the benefits of both teaching and learning. According to Hott and Walker (2012), RPT uses a format that emphasizes the use of teaching resources and peer review.

Academic, Social, and Affective Benefits of Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring strategies have been shown to boost academic accomplishment in the targeted area and cognitive gains for both tutors and tutees in studies (Duran, 2016; Falchikov, 2001; Kalkowski, 1995; Nguyen, 2013; Topping, 2005). Green (2011), in discussing the pedagogical benefits of collaborative learning strategies, mentions improved performance and an improvement in student retention, which refers to task completion and students’ involvement in their studies. Kalkowski (1995) says that tutors and tutees have reported the benefits of tutoring in mathematics, language arts, reading, and sciences in her descriptive analysis of research data. Educational benefits, such as improved performance, and metacognitive awareness, such as understanding how to learn, were discovered by Falchikov (2001). Similarly, according to Nguyen (2013), peer tutoring as a complement to traditional education fosters higher-order thinking since it involves “explaining concepts in detail, high-level questioning, and the application [of] supportive communication skills” (p. 3). The impact of peer tutoring on academic attainment was studied by Comfort and McMahon (2014). They found that both tutees and tutors in the peer tutored group received considerably higher grades than those in the non-peer group.

The advantages of peer tutoring in education are not just intellectual. On the social and affective aspects, several favorable consequences have been demonstrated. Kalkowski (1995) emphasizes self-esteem, social skills, school attitude, and attendance improvements. Vincent (1999) cites expected outcomes for the tutor and the learner identified in peer tutoring programs, including higher academic accomplishment and improvements in motivation, utilization of instructional time, self-direction and independence, attitude toward the tutored subject area, and increased self-confidence. According to Topping (2005), peer tutoring programs can result in affective changes in attitudes about school, teachers, subjects, peers, and self.

Falchikov (2001) claims that the various peer tutoring systems provide non-academic benefits in effect, motivation, cooperation, and confidence. Nguyen (2013) proposes that the gains of peer tutoring methodologies are also represented in beneficial effects on social, self-control, and behavioral outcomes when assessing the benefits of peer tutoring based on existing research. In addition, "teaching pupils peer tutoring practices can help students take responsibility for their learning and academic shortcomings" (p. 3). According to a manual for the implementation of peer tutoring published by Mexico's Ministry of Public Education (Secretara de Educación Publica, 2014), peer tutoring improves attitude and readiness to learn, fosters the personal development of the tutor and tutee, and aids in the strengthening of the learners' identity.

Peer tutoring involves students acting as academic tutors and tutees in a flexible setting where a high-achieving student is matched with a low-achieving student to study essential academic or behavioral issues (Hott & Walker, 2012). "Peer tutoring is a method in which one child teaches another youngster about a subject in which the first is an expert and the second is a novice" (as cited in Kalkowski, 2007). It is not a new notion; its origins can be traced back to Aristotle's usage of archons, but it was theorized by a Scotsman named Andrew Bell in 1795 after witnessing Indian orphans teaching each other alphabets by writing on sand. It was not until the nineteenth century that it was adopted by English and French schools (Briggs 2013).

The fundamental goal of today's educational system is to implant in students the perception that "their alleged failings or limitations can be attributed to a lack of effective tactics rather than a lack of ability" (Thanasoulas 2000). "Learning is an internalized form of a traditionally social activity," according to Vygotsky (1978), and "a learner might develop [his] potential interactively - via the guidance of supportive others such as parents, teachers, and peers" (as cited in Wenden, 1998: p.107). Every educational institution contains students with varying academic aptitude, necessitating academic support in peer tutoring, particularly for at-risk and high-risk students who need assistance passing their courses.

Statement of the problem

The primary objective of learning English as a foreign language is to communicate and engage with others. Harmer (1983:32) asserts that acquiring a foreign language is most effective when students are placed in conversational circumstances in the target language. Traditional teaching, which is typically exemplified by the presentation of content by the teacher, is derived directly from textbooks and delivered to a passive audience devoid of critical thought. Traditional teaching is criticized by AbdulRaheem et al. (2017) because it "allows pupils to get knowledge from the teacher without increasing their degree of involvement with the subject being taught."

There has been a worldwide surge in the number of peer tutoring programs (Chen & Liu, 2011). According to Topping (1996), this is because of the necessity to address low academic performance and the cost-effectiveness of peer tutoring practices. This study intends to evaluate instructors' attitudes, beliefs, and understanding of an English as a foreign language (EFL) peer tutoring experience in education, as well as peer tutoring's effects on students' English learning and socio-effective results.

The attitudes, opinions, and expertise of educators are significant from both a scientific and a practical standpoint for any discipline of education study. Instructors' attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge are crucial to contemporary educational developments because they indicate which stance teachers may adopt to promote student learning and enhance their own teaching techniques (Horzum and Ertekin 2018). Given the demonstrated effectiveness of peer tutoring, the question arises as to whether EFL instructors are educated to utilize this practice and how they view it. Despite continuous proof of the benefits of peer tutoring at various educational levels, instructors' attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding peer tutoring were not sufficiently explored.

Objectives of the study

This study aims to introduce the concept of peer teaching and instructors' attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding peer tutoring and barriers to this teaching model, as well as how and when to implement it in English language courses at English departments in colleges, institutes, and universities across the country in order to improve students' learning.

Research Questions

RQ1 – Do Iraqi EFL teachers have significant knowledge and positive attitudes and beliefs regarding peer tutoring?

RQ2 – Are there any significant differences between female and male Iraqi EFL teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding peer tutoring?

RQ3 – Are there any significant differences between public and private school Iraqi EFL teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding peer tutoring?

RQ4 – Are there any significant differences between Iraqi EFL teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge with high, medium, and low levels of experience regarding peer tutoring?

Limitations of the study

This study is restricted to high school teachers in Iraq/Kut during the academic year 2021/22. Based only on this research, it is simple to generalize that the peer-tutoring methodology is an effective training tool. Generalizability requires further investigations and research to be compelling and sufficient.

Definition of the key terms:

Attitudes

Teachers' perceptions and thoughts may influence the actions they conduct in relation to their classroom teaching techniques.

Beliefs

Teachers' views are often regarded as personal constructions that can give explanations, evaluations, and assessments of their actions.

Knowledge

A corpus of professional knowledge encompassing both knowledge of and knowledge of. broad educational concepts, skills, and knowledge. topic content for instruction

Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring is defined by Myers and Myers (1995:15) as "students helping other students study by giving resources, assistance, and direction."

Peer tutoring is defined by Ornstein and Lasley (2004:354) as "the assignment of students to help one another individually or in small groups in a range of scenarios."

Peer tutoring is defined by Faraj (2005:49) as "students instructing other students; the tutor peer may be of the same age, class, or academic level as the student or the group, or older."

LITERATURE REVIEW

While peer tutoring in the classroom has a large body of literature, there is little study on this method in the field of foreign language in higher education. Bradford-Watts (2011) found that, despite the challenges, students can learn and share what they have learned with their peers and construct engaging and dynamic lessons for their peers. Sharif et al. (2012) found that the nature of the activities employed in peer tutoring, which are not frightening and less intimidating than the more rigorous class atmosphere, can motivate students to put the language into practice.

Viáfara and Ariza (2008) conducted an action research study in Colombia to investigate students' and teachers' impressions of an existing peer tutoring program. The main challenges they discovered were a lack of time for both teachers and students, a lack of trust between teachers and students, students' fear, and students' ambiguity about which elements to work on. Huerta et al. (2010) implemented a peer tutoring program in Oaxaca, Mexico, emphasizing the importance of encouraging students to participate in their learning, improving tutors' teaching skills, and providing more opportunities for tutors to improve their English level; the authors concluded that the participants' and teachers' self-esteem was boosted. Few studies on participants' behaviors and attitudes about peer tutoring in higher education. McKellar (1986) investigated peer tutoring behaviors and the relationship between those activities and the level of learning accomplished in Esperanto. "Reading content from the study guide with minimal change or rewording" was the instructors' most common verbal conduct (p. 165). This author also discovered that tutors frequently provided inaccurate advice regarding rules, pronunciation, and vocabulary to tutees. She discovered that tutees' most common verbal conduct was to say words or sentences in response to the tutors' requests and that "the sole behavior predictive of tutee test results was the tutee's asking for clarification of information." (p. 166) since the higher their ratings were, the more tutees asked for clarification.

Madaio et al. (2017) looked at how "tutors' use of indirectness with feedback and instructions, and the influence of such uses on tutees' problem-solving" was affected by interpersonal proximity among participants (p. 1). They discovered those friend tutors give their tutees fewer indirect instructions and less positive feedback than stranger tutors. On the other hand, strange tutees were more successful at addressing difficulties. Madaio et al. (2018) looked at the effects of rapport, self-efficacy, and prior knowledge on the teaching and learning process and outcomes of peer tutoring and discovered that tutors in high-rapport pairs offered more help and encouraged their tutees to explain their problem-solving reasoning process than tutors in low-rapport pairs.

Raheem, Yusuf, and Odutayo (2017) investigated the impact of peer tutoring on economics students' academic performance in the Ilorin-South Local Government of Kwara State, Nigeria, and its gender implications. The experiment was undertaken in two classrooms at two different secondary schools to see if there was a difference in performance between students taught with peer tutoring and students taught with a traditional economics instructional technique. A total of 40 kids were in the experimental (peer tutoring) group, while 38 students were in the control (traditional education) group. The Economics Performance Test (EPT), a 50-item multiple-choice objective test, assessed academic performance. The research topics were: How do peer tutoring and traditional instructional methodologies affect students' economic performance?

Over the last few decades, research on peer tutoring for English learning has contributed to a deeper understanding of learning-by-teaching. According to the data, today's peer tutoring schemes can be organized to help all participants in various critical areas, including academic improvement, self-esteem, and confidence. More study on EFL peer tutoring in Latin American contexts is still needed.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of this study are 50 EFL secondary school teachers. 20 females and 30 males teachers participated in answering the questionnaire. Their age is from 30 to 40 with an experience average of 10 to 20 years in education. They all agreed to volunteer to answer the questionnaire.

Instruments

The instrumentation of this study are two tools. The first one is a questionnaire that was firstly developed by (Lidon Moliner & Francisco Alegre 2020) consist of five categories with 15 items in total.

The second instrument is a semi-structured group interview with teachers.

Data collection procedures

The data is collected from the participants at their working places, The researcher goes to the school and ask the teachers to answer the questionnaire. After collecting the answer from the teachers, a group interview will be held with the teachers. Of course there will be two interviews, one with female teachers and the second one with male teachers since they are in a different schools.

Data analysis

After collecting the quantitative data, it will be submitted and coded into the computer and it will be analyzed and the needed and suitable tests will be implemented to get the statistics required to answer the research question. The SPSS computer program version 27 will be used in the process.

Financial support and sponsorship: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None

REFERENCES

1. Abd Al Khanaifsway, A. N. (2019). A SOCIO-PRAGMATIC STUDY OF OFFER STRATEGIES MANIPULATED BY IRAQI DIALECT SPEAKERS. *The Islamic college university journal*, (51).\
2. Al Khanaifsway, A. N. (2017). A STYLISTIC STUDY OF EUPHEMISM IN JOHN DONNE'S SELECTED POEMS. *The Islamic University College Journal*, 35-38.
3. Al Khanaifsway, A. N. (2022). A PRAGMATIC STUDY OF PRESUPPOSITION IN IMAM ALI'S SOME SELECTED TRANSLATED SAYINGS IN 'NAHJUL BALAGHA', *Eastern Journal of Languages, Linguistics and Literatures (EJLLL)*. Vol.3, No.4.
4. Al-Khanaifsway, A. N. (2016). Investigating Iraqi EFL learners' use of the speech act of agreement. *Adab Al-Kufa*,1(27), 11-30.
5. Al-Khanaifsway, A. N. (2019). DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH'S SPEECH AT THE ISLAM CENTRE IN WASHINGTON. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*. Vol. No. 9, Issue No. III, Jul-Sep.
6. Al-Khanaifsway, A. N. (2020). A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF INTENTIONALITY STANDARD IN JOE BIDEN'S INAUGURAL SPEECH. *International Journal of Development in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 10.
7. Al-Khanaifsway, A. N. (2021). A Pragma-Dialectical Study of David Hare's 'Stuff Happens. . *Zien Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*. Vol.2, 136-186.
8. Al-Khanaifsway, A. N. (2021). A Stylistic Study of Compliment Speech Act in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. *International Journal of Advancement in Social Science and Humanity*. Vol.12.
9. Almassaad, A., & Alotaibi, K. (2012). The attitudes and opinions of tutees and tutors toward using cross-age online tutoring. *Psychol Research*, 2(4), 247-259. <https://doi.org/10.17265/2159-5542/2012.04.004>
10. Black, T. R. (2003). *Doing quantitative research in the social sciences: An integral approach to research design, measurement and statistics*. SAGE.
11. Bradford-Watts, K. (2011). Students teaching students? Peer teaching in the EFL classroom in Japan. *The Language Teacher*, 35(5), 31-35. <https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT35.5-3>
12. Chen, C., & Liu, C.-C. (2011). A case study of the peer tutoring program in higher education. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 11, 1-10.

13. Comfort, P., & McMahon, J. J. (2014). The effect of peer tutoring on academic achievement. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 6(1), 168-175. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-06-2012-0017>
14. Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE.
15. Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. SAGE.
16. Duran, D. (2006). Tutoría entre iguales, la diversidad en positivo [Peer tutoring, diversity in positive]. *Revista Aula de Innovación Educativa*, (153-154), 7-11.
17. Duran, D. (2016): Learning-by-teaching: Evidence and implications as a pedagogical mechanism. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 54(5), 476-484. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2016.1156011>
18. Duran, D., Flores, M., Mosca, A., & Santiviago, C. (2015). Tutoría entre iguales, del concepto a la práctica en las diferentes etapas educativas [Peer tutoring, from concept to practice in the different educational stages]. *Experiencias Educativas*, 2(1), 31-39.
19. Falchikov, N. (2001). *Learning together: Peer tutoring in higher education*. Routledge Falmer.
20. Green, P. (2011). A literature review of peer assisted learning (PAL). National HE STEM, University of Bath. <https://bit.ly/3bvxbwC>
21. Hott, B., & Walker, J. (April, 2012). Peer tutoring. Council for learning disabilities. <https://bit.ly/31XLJuU>
22. Kalkowski, P. (1995). Peer and cross-age tutoring. U.S. Department of Education. <https://bit.ly/3bv9AVP>
23. LoCastro, V. (2003). *An introduction to pragmatics: Social action for language teachers*. The University of Michigan Press.
24. Madaio, M. A., Cassell, J., & Ogan, A. (2017, June). The impact of peer tutors' use of indirect feedback and instructions [Paper presentation]. 12th International Conference of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning.
25. Madaio, M. A., Peng, K., Ogan, A., & Casell, J. (2018, June). A climate of support: A process-oriented analysis of the impact of rapport on peer tutoring [Paper presentation]. 12th International Conference of the Learning Sciences.
26. Matukhin, D., & Bolgova, D. (2015). Learner-centered approach in teaching foreign language: Psychological and pedagogical conditions. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 206, 148-155. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.10.044>
27. McKellar, N. A. (1986). Behaviors used in peer tutoring. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 54(3), 163-167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1986.10806416>
28. Nguyen, M. (2013, January 7). Peer tutoring as a strategy to promote academic success [Research brief]. <https://bit.ly/3bAG0yw>
29. Razia, R. (2012). The effect of peer tutoring on student achievement in the subject of English at secondary level in the light of Vygotsky's theory [Unpublished master's thesis]. Foundation University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Islamabad, Pakistan.
30. Robinson, D. R., Schofield, J. W., & Steers-Wentzell, K. L. (2005). Peer and cross-age tutoring in math: Outcomes and their design implications. *Educational Psychology Review*, 17(4), 327-362. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-005-8137-2>
31. Sanchez-Aguilar, J. (2020). Peer tutoring in language learning in higher education: The impact at a BIS university [Unpublished master's thesis]. Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla.
32. Sharif, N. M., Zakaria, M. H., Mansor, W. F. A. W., Nordin, N. A., Fong, N. S., & Mustafa, H. R. (2012). Peer-tutoring and tertiary ESL learners. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 66, 441-447. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.11.288>
33. Topping, K. J. (1996). The effectiveness of peer tutoring in further and higher education: A typology and review of the literature. *Higher Education*, 32(3), 321-345. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00138870>
34. Topping, K. J. (2000). Tutoring. *International Academy of Education*.